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People's Reporter

A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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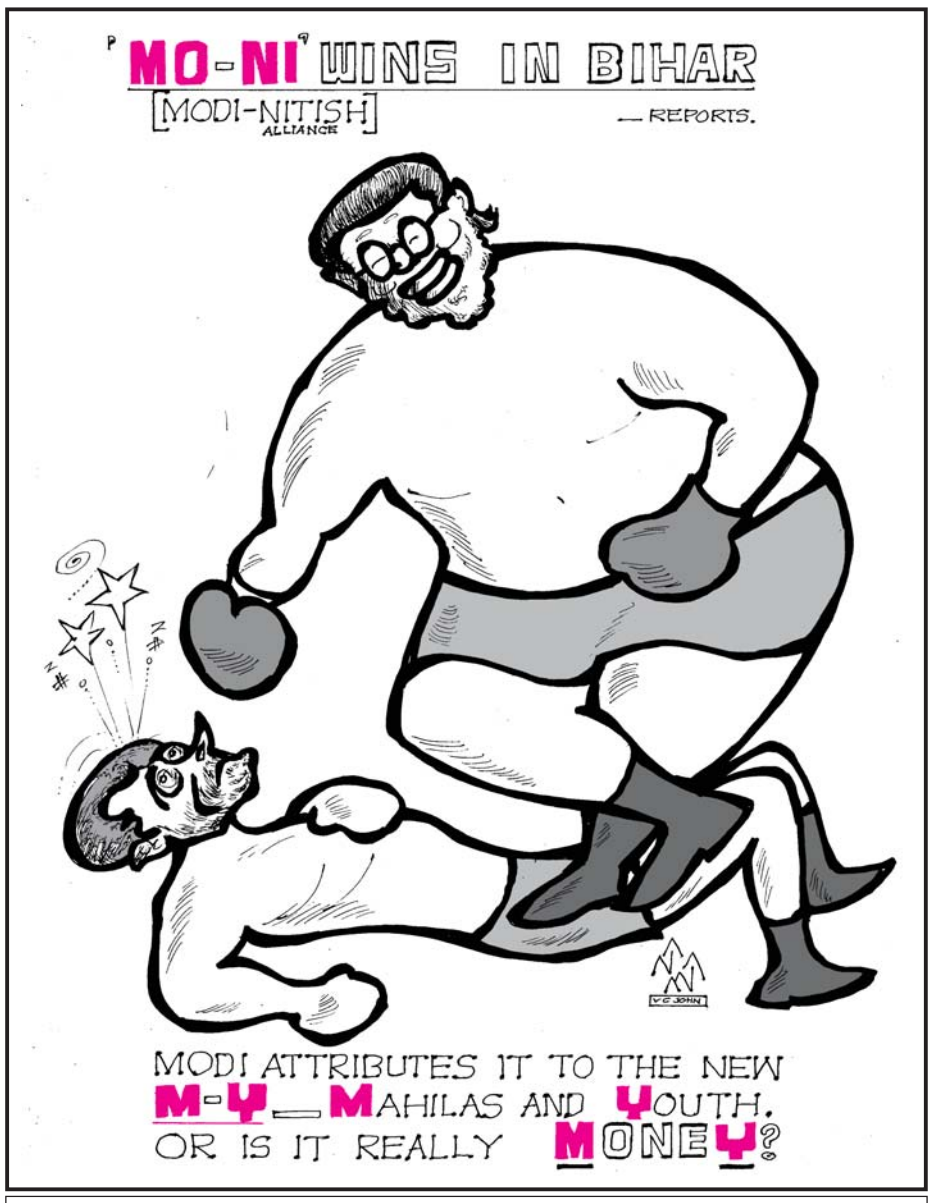

Christian Conference of Asia

an organ and fellowship of churches and ecumenical councils in asia for initiating and facilitating dynamic christian witness and action

Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference

"Ensuring gender equality is a shared moral and social responsibility"

Organised by the CCA under the theme "Towards Upholding the Dignity and Rights of Women in Asia", the Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference (AEWC) was held at Payap University, in Chiang Mai, from 12 to 15 November 2025 with the participation of eighty women representatives from across Asia, from churches and national ecumenical organisations.

Delivering the opening address at the AEWC, the CCA General Secretary Dr. Mathews George Chunakara said, "Gender equality is a shared moral and social responsibility. When women's rights are violated, human dignity of all is diminished. Although the world has undergone profound changes since the 1995 Beijing Conference, the full and equal participation of women and girls remains one of the most powerful strategies for achieving gender equality, prosperity, peace, and stability in societies worldwide".

The CCA General Secretary noted that, despite global progress, violence against women persists in every region. Women remain under-represented in leadership

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World Council of Churches · World Communion of Reformed Churches · The Lutheran World Federation · World Methodist Council · cwm a partnership of churches in mission · USPG

New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA)

Joint letter to G20 Leaders' Summit urging economic, social, and climate justice

The World Council of Churches (WCC), World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council, Council for World Mission, and United Society Partners in the Gospel — collectively representing 600 million Christians — in a letter to the 2025 G20 Leaders' Summit, urged a New International Financial and Economic Architecture. "The world today is marked by unprecedented economic, social, and environmental crises. Economic inequality has reached levels that threaten social stability."

Excerpts from the Joint Letter

The World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Lutheran World Federation, World Methodist Council, Council for World Mission and United Society Partners in the Gospel embrace the theme of the 2025 G20 Leaders' Summit, "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability" and the emphasis to make progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the spirit of Ubuntu.

- Our organizations believe that a fairer, climate-resilient world requires nothing less than a New International Financial and Economic Architecture that:
- Is grounded in the principles of economic, social and climate justice;
- Serves the real economy of production and employment instead of financial speculation, which can be driven by recent developments in AI-technology;
- Limits greed and the concentration of wealth and power;

Accounts for social and environmental responsibilities and invests in communities and planetary restoration.

The world today is marked by unprecedented economic, social, and environmental crises. Economic inequality has reached levels that threaten social stability. **According to the Oxfam Report 2023, nearly two-thirds of all wealth created since 2020, a total of $42 trillion, went to the richest 1%. This is almost twice as much money as the other 99% of the world's population.** A specific yet interconnected marker of injustice is an increase of global public debt to over $100 trillion, highlighting a systemic imbalance in which financial burdens are increasingly overshadowing economic output. Developing nations face mounting debt servicing costs that often exceed their expenditures on essential services like health and education, compromising the fundamental rights of their populations. This escalating debt crisis reflects a broader injustice, where the financial architecture perpetuates inequality, underscoring the need for urgent systemic changes that prioritize human rights and equitable development over unsustainable fiscal policies.

Our organizations, representing 600 million Christians around the world, welcome and support the proposal of the G20 Presidency to work towards solidarity, equality and sustainability by encouraging a paradigm shift to "situate inequalities at the heart of economic policy making." 1 We agree that "these challenges are difficult to overcome given crippling sovereign debt levels that force many countries to sacrifice their developmental obligations to service unmanageable debts." **2** We urge you, the G 20 leaders, to make decisions towards justice for the 99% of the world's population, and not for the benefit of the already super rich. **We demand actions according to the calls of the Turn Debt into Hope campaign:**

1. End the debt crisis now by cancelling and addressing unjust and unsustainable debts, without placing economic policy conditions.

2. Prevent debt crises from occurring again by addressing their root causes and reforming the global financial system to prioritize people and the planet.

3. Establish a permanent, transparent, binding, and comprehensive debt framework within the United Nations.

More specifically, we make the following demands to deepen the

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People's Reporter
A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

A crack on the citadel of capitalism

The election of Mr. Zohran Mamdani, holding the banner of democratic socialism, as the Mayor of New York city, the citadel of global capitalism, despite President Trump's opposition with tooth and nail, to his candidature unearths hidden cracks on the apparently invincible foundation of the capitalist system. According to conventional wisdom, any one of Mr. Mamdani's identities - a democratic socialist, a Muslim and an immigrant - has been sufficient to get rejected in the election to this post. Along with this ground reality, President Trump accused him as a Communist and threatened the voters that he would cut Federal grant to the city if he got elected as the Mayor. His surprising vicitory, against all these odds, ought to be an eye-opener. People's rejection of career politicians and money power in elections and their embracing of socialistic democratic policy in the heart of world capitalism, show the growing gap between the increase in wealth and the struggles of the people to meet their daily needs.

Despite repeated crises, capitalism has been demonstrating its ability to 'succeed' and survive by postponing the hopes of the people at the bottom continuously. New York has been the world's financial hub where billionaires have been multiplying their wealth by transferring wealth from the hands of the people to their pockets. As a result, the life of the vast majority of the people both there and across the world has been getting worse. Owing to the dynamics of wealth creation under capitalism, the share of people working in finance and allied fields in New York between 2005 and 2025 has declined from 16% to 13%; and that of low paid workers in this city with 8.5 million inhabitants has increased from 30% to 40%. Further, nearly one in four residents of New York, is an immigrant. Along with the declining wages, expenses for housing, transportation and food have been rising steep. Thus, the capitalist development process has been hitting hard the life of the vast majority of the population. It is under this scenario, the majority of people of the city voted for social democratic policies of Mr. Mamdani. He, like many democratic socialists, holds dual membership - he is both a Democrat and a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), which is not a political party. The DSA adopted a new programmatic vision at its 2025 National Convention titled "Workers Deserve More". The programme declares its mission to unite workers into a powerful political movement to win the battle for democracy, with the ultimate goal of putting workers in charge of government through a new democratic constitution based on proportional representation that will end the role of money power.

This differs fundamentally from European social democracy that seeks to reform capitalism through robust welfare state, progressive taxation and strong labour protection while keeping the capitalist market economy intact. The DSA, however, aims to gradually replace capitalism itself with "social ownership" of major industries. The programme explicitly identifies capitalism as "the cause of violence, unemployment, and a climate crisis that poses an existential threat to life on earth". While the votes of the people in New York in favour of Mamdani, sheds some light in the dark tunnel of the miserable life of the people across the world, we should be aware of the success of capitalists and their agents to circumvent all resistances they face by hook and crook. Eternal vigilance of the suffering people on the causes of their oppression is the real remedy to save their lives from misery and exploitation.

Thought for the Fortnight

Capitalism, as it exists today, is, in my opinion,
the real source of evils.
I am convinced, there is only one way
to eliminate these grave evils,
namely through the establishment of a socialist economy,
accompanied by an educational system
which would be oriented toward social goals.

– Albert Einstein

A Reformed And A Reforming Church

M. Mani Chacko

The five important and fundamental doctrines – *"Sola Scriptura or Scripture Alone", "Sola Gratia or Salvation by Grace Alone", "Sola Fide or Salvation by Faith Alone", "Solus Christus or In Christ Alone", "Soli Deo Gloria or For the Glory of God Alone"* – are the reasons for the Protestant Reformation. They are at the heart of where the Catholic Church went wrong in its doctrine, and why the Protestant Reformation was necessary to return churches throughout the world to correct doctrine and biblical teaching. They are just as important today in evaluating a church and its teachings as they were then.
In many ways, much of Protestant Christianity needs to be challenged to return to these fundamental doctrines of the faith, much like the reformers challenged the Catholic Church to do in the sixteenth century. Yes, as children of the Reformation, we are constantly reforming, living our faith anew, updating it constantly, dialoging with other traditions, and committing ourselves to a justice-seeking, world-affirming, beauty-creating faith.

[Second part of the article 'A Reformed And A Reforming Church]

2. "Sola Gratia," Salvation by Grace Alone:

This affirms the Biblical doctrine that salvation is by God's grace alone. God's grace in Christ is not merely necessary, but is the sole efficient cause of salvation. This grace is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life. It's all grace.

We receive God's love regardless of our current spiritual or ethical state. Though unmerited, grace is not "in spite of" of who we are, but "because of" who God is. Grace does not diminish the human enterprise, but invites us to live abundantly, fully, and creatively.

Though grace is universal, it is not unilateral or uniform. Grace works uniquely within each person. Grace does not depend on our works; we receive it, rather than earn it. Still, the shape of grace is personal and depends on our relationship to God and one another.

Grace does not save "depraved" humanity but heals "good, but imperfect" humanity. Grace calls us to action, bringing forth our goodness and inviting us to be God's partners in healing the earth. Though the first Protestant Reformers scorned Pelagius due to their uncritical acceptance of Augustine's diatribes against the Celtic theologian, today's Reformers can learn much from Pelagius. In fact, we need both Augustine and Pelagius in the formation of a holistic faith: unstoppable grace comes to us, accepting and empowering us in all our brokenness; grace awakens our essential goodness and invites us to be partners in God's mission.

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Former Director, Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore,
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God's sovereignty does not depend on our passivity. Rather, our receptivity to grace leads to action and mission. The more complete our responses to grace, the greater works God and we can achieve in the world. God does not compete with us in power; rather God's power enhances our creativity, freedom, and power to change the world.

3. "Sola Fide," Salvation by Faith Alone:

This affirms the Biblical doctrine that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. It is by faith in Christ that His righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice.

Though faith always has an "in spite of" element, faith is not affirming things we know to be untrue scientifically, ethically, or theologically. As Luther asserted, faith is a lively, reckless confidence in the grace of God. Faith involves trust and relationship, grounded in experience, study, and community.

Faith is not strict adherence to doctrine, with death and damnation awaiting all who doubt or disbelieve; rather, faith involves openness to experiencing the divine in all its manifestations, even the unfamiliar and unexpected, witness of persons of other faith traditions, seekers, agnostics, and atheists. It involves openness to following divine guidance wherever it takes us, and even beyond the precincts of Christianity. It is an act of faith to affirm the truths of Christianity while embracing divine wisdom broadcast in other religious traditions. Our truths do not depend on their falsehoods, but an ongoing trust in God's evolving grace and wisdom reflected in human finitude and imperfection.

In the spirit of author Madeleine L'Engle, when she was asked if she believed in God without any doubts, faith asserts "I believe in God with all my doubts." Thomas, not the fundamentalist, is the true knight of faith, who is able to live with doubt while still seeking greater insights into the truth.

4. "Solus Christus," In Christ Alone:

This affirms the Biblical doctrine that salvation is found in Christ alone and that His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to God the Father. Christ alone is the rock of our salvation, affirmed the Reformers. While some read this in terms of "no salvation outside

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Reformation

"Celebration of God's Sovereignty, Justice, and Peace"

Arun Gopal

[Second and concluding part of 'Reformation: "Celebration of God's Sovereignty, Justice, and Peace" ']

III. Caution

(Rom. 14: 13-23)

Here is a caution to those whom God calls to establish His sovereignty, which issues itself in justice and peace. We read in Romans 14: 17,18 "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men". Here, eating and drinking refer to meeting the routine necessities of life along with clothing and housing. However, they should not become the major preoccupations, leading to gluttony, greed, and consumerism, at the expense of our primary commitment to the Kingdom of God.

For history has proved that people who have come out boldly with genuine commitment to serve God and His Church, especially to set things right in the Church of God, being crippled halfway through due to lack of commitment, self-control and contentment. The best example is Nicolaus, about whom it is said that he was one of the seven deacons, to address the grievances of the Hellenist widows that needed structural changes. He was one of the seven who were ".. men of good repute, full of the Spirit and wisdom …" (Acts 6:3). Yet we read Nicolaus had drifted from the ministry entrusted to him and became a heretic, compromising discipleship with pleasure seeking. Hence the Church in Pergamum was warned, not to associate itself with his followers,which we read in Revelations 2: 15, 16 – "So also you have some who hold to the teachings of Nicolaitans. Therefore, repent …".

In the Old Testament there are accounts of a few individuals yielding to their fleshly appetites. In Genesis 25:29-34 we find Esau despising his birthright for a bowl of stew to satisfy his immediate need. His sensitivities became numb such that he could not perceive the future consequences. When Jacob and Esau met in Gen. 33:1-11while Jacob was offering gifts to Esau, as his response to Esau's benevolence, Esau says, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself" (33:9). If he had not surrendered his birthright to Jacob, Esau too would have had a place in God's master plan, as did Jacob. Further in Judges 16:18-22 we see how Samson broke his Nazarite vows and allowed his passion to determine his actions, that yielded defeat, humiliation, blindness, and untimely death. We see him disclosing to Delilah ".. I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb. If my head is shaved, then my strength will leave me" (16:17). This shows that when one allows her, or his bodily urges, to take precedence especially over spiritual aspirations, they fall short of God's designs.

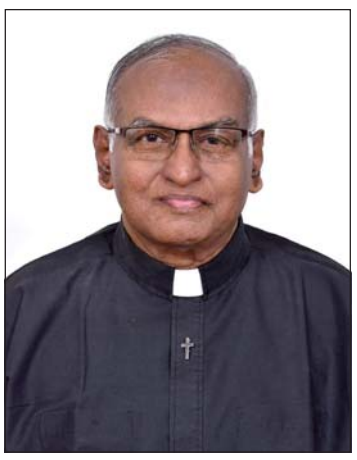
It needs to be stated that reformation is an ongoing process in the Church of Jesus Christ. Those that are foundational for reformation include Biblical literacy among the grassroot level Church members, mature understanding of the Christian faith and commitment to radical Discipleship. Both the Theological colleges and the established churches have a great responsibility to train the younger generation of clergy to be loyal to the Theological education imparted to them to ".. guard the good deposit entrusted (2 Tim. 1:14)" to them, by way of critical Biblical scholarship, contextual interpretation of Scriptures, sharp Theological thinking, latest Homiletical patterns and communication skills, systematic ministerial training and ministerial formation.

The message that comes to us emphatically is that whom God calls to reform His Church and establish peace and justice both inside and outside the Church, need to set their priorities carefully. In this connection, Church History presents the families of Martin Luther and John Wesley as role models to us in commitment, contentment and disciplined living. Martin Luther's wife Catherine never wanted to lead an extravagant family life. She used to sell homemade wine to the parishioners to supplement her husband's meager salary, as a parish priest. Susanna Wesley, the mother of John Wesley used to mend school uniforms of her ten children, until the early hours of the next day, as Samuel Wesley was a parish priest with a low income. Susanna and Samuel wanted their children to develop a spirit of contentment without lavish food or clothing.

IV. Concentration

(John 18:33-38)

Amid physical pain, torture and mental agony that which was uppermost in the mind of Christ was His mission. Here, we see Jesus' Spirit of Resilience. For, we read in John 18: 33, 34 "So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, are you the King of the Jews?". And Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?". Jesus continues in verse 37 – ".. you say that I am a King. For this purpose, I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world – **to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice". It is this Jesus who is our inspiration. We need to keep him always before our eyes. That is why the expression "Concentration" is chosen.**



Rev. Dr. Arun Gopal was Director of the Christian Education Department and the Pastoral Aid Department of the CSI Synod. He was also Prof. of Christian Education in the Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji Islands, Professor at Gurukul Theological College and Research Instititue, Chennai and at United Theological College, Bangalore.

When Martin Luther was carrying on his mission to reform the Catholic Church Pope Leo X called him "a wild boar in God's vineyard" and worked out a strategy to eliminate Luther. Even though Martin Luther knew all about it, he did not fail to concentrate on his mission. Huldrych Zwingli (1519-1523) was executed by the Catholic fanatics who resisted the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland. He surrendered to such a painful death willingly, believing that it was the cost of his commitment to his God given mission. John Calvin (1526-1564) was banished from Geneva, and he spent the last days of life in exile at France. Yet he never gave up his mission to proclaim what he believed to be the truth of the Gospel. John Wesley (1703-1738) suffered public ridicule, verbal abuse, and physical assaults during his Methodist revival meetings. He continued his mission with determination along with his brother Charles Wesley. Both John Wesley and Charles Wesley endured the stress and strain of their ministry concentrating on what they wanted to accomplish.

In this connection, I wish to refer to the concentration and determination exhibited by the participants to accomplish their mission, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. It is reported that the representatives of the several churches, including the Christian community in India undertook the hazardous journey to Nicaea. Not all of them could participate in the Council due to health impediments, inclement weather, and attack by dacoits. Among those who were able to make it there were some with broken arms, injured bodies, and scars on their faces as they had to face physical harm and beatings of the enemies of Christians. Yet fixing their eyes on their mission they attended the Council of Nicaea and evolved the classic faith formula, that has come to us as the Nicene Creed recited Sunday after Sunday in all the established churches. This year being the 1700th anniversary of the formulation of the Nicene Creed, all roads are leading to Nicaea (located in the province of Bursa in Iznik, Turkey) and several pilgrimages are being undertaken.

In conclusion, it needs to be stated that reformation is an ongoing process in the Church of Jesus Christ. Those that are foundational for reformation include Biblical literacy among the grassroot level Church members, mature understanding of the Christian faith and commitment to radical Discipleship. Both the Theological colleges and the established churches have a great responsibility to train the younger generation of clergy to be loyal to the Theological education imparted to them to ".. guard the good deposit entrusted (2 Tim. 1:14)" to them, by way of critical Biblical scholarship, contextual interpretation of Scriptures, sharp Theological thinking, latest Homiletical patterns and communication skills, systematic ministerial training and ministerial formation.

For today we see the charismatic leaders and revival preachers, (without any proper theological education and concept of Church) being invited to the congregations of the established churches, for all significant events to proclaim the Word of God. Just because they are "crowd-pullers", their Biblical literalism and proof text methods are overlooked. Thus, our young people are exposed to great dangers and many of them fall a prey to their emotional appeals and leave their parent churches and go to places of "Religious Entertainment", that are becoming increasingly popular as contemporary worship centers. Here, emotional satisfaction takes precedence over "Fresh Obedience to Living Christ".

It is very essential for the pastors not to yield to the temptation for popularity in the congregation and to win the favor of their Church committees and compromise their calling and fail to ".. equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for building up of the Body of Christ …" (Eph. 4:12). The challenges facing the mainline churches have been forewarned by Paul when he says – "for the time is coming when the people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions (2 Tim. 4:3). ●

The Poor are with Us!

Cedric Prakash

The Catholic Church, observed the 'World Day of the Poor', on 16 November 2025. The day has a special significance this year, since it came in the wake of Pope Leo XIV's first major papal document: An Apostolic Exhortation addressed "*to all Christians, on love for the poor,*" titled '*Dilexi Te*' ('I have loved you') and dated 4 October (the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi). About four months earlier, on 13 June 2025, the Feast of St Anthony of Padua, Pope Leo, released to the world his message for the 9th World Day of the Poor, on the theme '*You are my hope' (*cf. Ps 71:5). Both in his message and in his exhortation, he makes one thing clear: The Catholic Church takes sides with the poor and that one should do everything possible, to become and to be visible as the Church of/for the poor!

For the 'World Day of the Poor', Pope Leo gave a very incisive and challenging message: to pray, reflect and act upon. Focussing on the theme, which is the crux of his message, he emphatically wrote, *"The biblical summons to hope thus entails the duty to shoulder our responsibilities in history, without hesitation.* ***Charity, in fact, "is the greatest social commandment."*** *Poverty has structural causes that must be addressed and eliminated. In the meantime, each of us is called to offer new signs of hope that will bear witness to Christian charity, Hospitals and schools, for instance, were institutions established to reach out to the most vulnerable and marginalized. These institutions should be a part of every country's public policy, yet wars and inequalities often prevent this from happening…The poor are not a distraction for the Church, but our beloved brothers and sisters, for by their lives, their words and their wisdom, they put us in contact with the truth of the Gospel.* ***The celebration of the 'World Day of the Poor' is meant to remind our communities that the poor are at the heart of all our pastoral activity... God took on their poverty in order to enrich us".***

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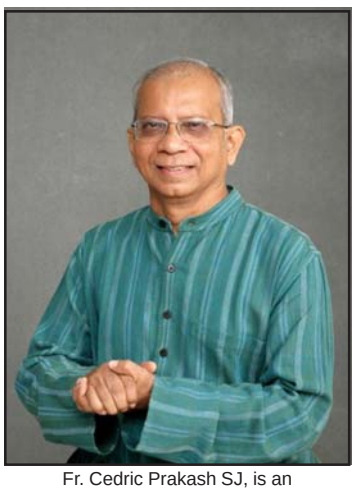
Pope Leo's message is crafted in six pointed units. At the outset, he gives us a scriptural justification and understanding of his message. He asserts that, "*amid life's trials, our hope is inspired by the firm and reassuring certainty of God's love, poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit".* **After this introduction, he emphasises the need and importance of having God as our first and only hope and that one should not rely on the materiality of this world.** The poor, have nothing, they rely on God. "*The poor can be witnesses to a strong and steadfast hope, precisely because they embody it in the midst of uncertainty, poverty, instability and marginalization. They cannot rely on the security of power and possessions; on the contrary, they are at their mercy and often victims of them.*"



Fr. Cedric Prakash SJ, is an internationally renowned human rights, reconciliation and peace activist/writer.

Trusting in God alone is what gives meaning to our lives. Pope Leo is unequivocal when he states, "*The gravest form of poverty is not to know God."* In the third unit, he continues, "*This is a rule of faith and the secret of hope: all this earth's goods, material realities, worldly pleasures, economic prosperity, however important, cannot bring happiness to our hearts. Wealth often disappoints and can lead to tragic situations of poverty — above all to the poverty born of the failure to recognize our need for God and of the attempt to live without him".*

His next step is on Christian hope, which he notes, is symbolised with an anchor, providing stability and security. "*Christian hope is like an anchor that grounds our hearts in the promise of the Lord Jesus, who saved us by his death and resurrection and will come again among us".* He situates this hope in the tradition of the Church saying, *"the Church's tradition has constantly insisted on the circular relationship between the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Hope is born of faith, which nourishes and sustains it on the foundation of charity, the mother of all virtues. All of us need charity, here and now.* ***Charity is not just a promise; it is a present reality to be embraced with joy and responsibility. Charity engages us and guides our decisions towards the common good. Conversely, those who lack charity not only lack faith and hope; they also rob their neighbours of hope."*** **Pope Leo, like Pope Francis, does not mince words!**

After giving us the crux of his message in Unit 5, he winds up in his characteristic style (very much like Pope Francis). He says, *"each day we encounter poor or impoverished people. We too may have less than before and are losing what once seemed secure: a home, sufficient food for each day, access to healthcare and a good education, information, religious freedom and freedom of expression…. In this promotion of the common good, our social responsibility is grounded in God's creative act, which gives everyone a share in the goods of the earth. Like those goods, the fruits of human labour*

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A Reformed And A Reforming Church

>>> Contd. from Page 2 Col. 4

the church" or outside a specific doctrinal affirmation of faith, I would suggest that "Christ alone" points to the interplay of universality and diversity in God's revelation.

The healing and saving power in Christ is unrestricted by time and place. Grace is not grace if it is limited to adherence to a particular doctrinal understanding or religious tradition. Christ liberates us to seek truth and healing wherever they are found, whether in the laboratory, hospital, library, or other faith traditions. Christ opens the doors of revelation to all creation, giving hospitality and inspiration to God's beloved children everywhere. Christ is alive, and moving within us to fulfill his healing, justice-seeking, and life-transforming mission in our time.

5. "Soli Deo Gloria, For the Glory of God Alone:

This affirms the Biblical doctrine that salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God for God's glory alone. It affirms that we must glorify God always, and must live our entire lives before God, under the authority of God. God's glory alone is the center of our lives and all creation. God is the heart of reality, in whom we live and move and have our being.

To affirm God's glory is to rejoice in the wonder of life and the beauty of our own lives. God's glory transforms and enlivens us, and opens us—with Isaiah—to discover that "the whole earth is filled with God's glory." A relational, non-competitive God, defined by grace and love, seeks our abundant life. **As a wise church father proclaimed, the glory of God is a human being fully alive.**

In light of God's glory, we can affirm "I thank you, God, for the wonder of my being." We can greet each day, grateful to God and ready for action, with the words, "This is the day that God has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it."

A God of grace and glory moves through every cell and every soul, enlivening, enlightening, and energizing. God's glory is in our salvation—our wholeness and healing—and in the transformation of this good earth so that it might reflect God's aim at beauty, truth, goodness, and justice. We give God glory by following the counsel of Mother Teresa, "to do something beautiful for God." **We give glory to God by living in a sacramental way, seeing the whole world as filled with God's glory, and bringing forth God's glory by sharing in God's pathways of salvation for all creation.**

These five important and fundamental doctrines are the reason for the Protestant Reformation. They are at the heart of where the Catholic Church went wrong in its doctrine, and why the Protestant Reformation was necessary to return churches throughout the world to correct doctrine and biblical teaching. They are just as important today in evaluating a church and its teachings as they were then.

In many ways, much of Protestant Christianity needs to be challenged to return to these fundamental doctrines of the faith, much like the reformers challenged the Catholic Church to do in the sixteenth century. Yes, as children of the Reformation, we are constantly reforming, living our faith anew, updating it constantly, dialoging with other traditions, and committing ourselves to a justice-seeking, world-affirming, beauty-creating faith.

To be continued

In the next issue

Concluding part of the article *'A Reformed And A Reforming Church'*

Now is the Kairos to Meet Dalit Saints

R. Daniel Premkumar

Biblical World view is non-discriminatory and egalitarian. What more, God of the Bible makes an option for the widow, the orphan and the migrant. In an age when the emperors believed that they were direct descendants of the sun god *Re*, Yahweh takes the cause of the *'Hapiru' (Slaves)*. Thus follows Jesus' story for the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, like His Father in Heaven has table fellowship with the sinners and publicans. No wonder, when the love of Jesus was announced on roof tops in India through evangelistic campaigns, millions of Dalits and other ex-communicated people groups responded to the call and thronged the Churches and continue to do so even today.

A. Whither Saints:

While the Biblical view affirms that all humans carry the very image of God, the Creator, as it is testified in *Gen 1:26 'Let us make human in our image'.* Contrary to this, the nations that colonized the rest of the world evolved a theology of their own to recruit Millions of Africans as slaves who can be bought or exchanged as commodities in the market square, so they had to devise an article of faith that black people do not have soul (God's image). A similar narrative was devised in India to make millions of untouchables unfit for sainthood.

Church which reverenced the Holy Scriptures did not question the above dominant narrative and continues to accept the diktat without questioning or contesting. In addition, the Church also believes in the eternal Logos becoming flesh and blood in Jesus of Nazareth. Even the incarnation of Jesus had not prompted the church to look for saints among the rugged, the soiled and the cursed. For the Church in India, we believe and practice only one singular perspective on spirituality downloaded from the dominant. **As Christian Dalits we say what the dominant says and do what they tell us to do. Yes, we have not critiqued what the dominant scheme is, but until this day fell short of visualizing God in his great mercy has done in Christ treating us on par with anyone on earth.**

Further to the disadvantage of Dalits, prevalence and practice of caste in the Church has robbed Dalits of many Beatietudes, foremost is witnessing some of the Dalit individuals whom I have known personally and admired in my fitiy years of Rural Ministry in South India most suited for Sainthood. So, the most deserving candidates may have to be literally ***'resurrected'*** from churches' living memory.

Deserving Dalit Christians have not only lost the opportunity to be elevated as saints the caste also robbed material blessings like land, wealth, education, vocation etc. These blessings surely would also bestow self-confidence, honor, dignity and social recognition.

B. From Untouchables to Saints:

Four decades ago, we ***(Dalit Ikya Vedika)*** fought aggressively with people against untouchability, discrimination, and the infamous two-glass system. Back then, we knew only the outlines of the Gospel. Today, we have seen its depths: For, **Christ stands with the Dalits in their penury, state of untouchability and cursedness. This awareness is revolutionary not only to see Christ limited to the Holy of Holies but we meet Christ in Secular realm as well.**

Now is the time to purge the spiritual pollution wrongly attached to Dalit Castes for Millenia. In Christ, Dalit dignity is restored — not by erasing who we are, but by re-claiming it. The day is coming when the caste veil will lift, and the world will recognize saints among Dalit people — holy men and women whose Spiritual Worth is long hidden by the false theology of Caste.

Bishop Dr. R. Daniel Premkumar,
Anglican Union – India,
Ruvuuma Diocese,
Tanzania Emissary Bishop
to Minister Congregations and Pastors
who have No One to Turn to.

When we see ourselves through Christ's eyes, history itself will be re-written — not just from the dominant point of view, but from the perspective of those on the margin. Only New Age Dalit Christians can build a future where faith, justice, and solidarity unite — crossing the boundaries of religion and caste to bring Christ's reign on earth.

C. Naming the Chosen as Dalit Saints:

A day will surely dawn when the world will judge Indian dominant class for sweeping aside under the iron carpet of caste by discriminating at birth and descent. We thought only in physical and social realms that injustice can be inflicted and we are wrong! The so-called Saints from the upper strata usurp or mop up all potential manifestations of spirituality unto themselves. Since, the dominant have ordained that Panchama's are simply outside the purview divine scheme and social order surely Chandalas got to do follow the dominants' word!

On the contrary, Biblical World view is non-discriminatory and egalitarian. What more, God of the Bible makes an option for the widow, the orphan and the migrant. In an age when the emperors believed that they were direct descendants of the sun god Re, Yahweh takes the cause of the 'Hapiru' (Slaves). Thus follows Jesus' story for the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth like His father in Heaven has table fellowship with the sinners and publicans. No wonder when the love of Jesus was announced on roof tops in India through evangelistic campaigns, millions of Dalits and other ex-communicated people groups responded to the call and thronged the Churches and continue to do so even today.

According to the Biblical witness, spirituality is no one's privy purse. So, we are looking for Saints among the ex-communicated people groups who have labored for the building up of the church and for spreading beatitudes of Jesus across various caste communities.

D. When Part is Sick, the Whole is Sick:

In a body politic when almost a quarter of population are disenfranchised and counted as 'no people' the whole body politic is soiled and sick. If India has to be healed from the wounds inflicted by the stranglehold of caste it is for the Dalits to initiate the healing process which may begin with the head and down with body politic. Surely, many right thinking people from the upper crest would support this process of identifying individuals who qualify to be called Saints among ex-communicated people groups.

E. The 'How' Question:

Many questions might crop-up as to how this grandiose process of identifying and elevating Dalit individuals as Saints. Similar to what parallel Papal Authority do we have to name the Saints. We have none! Even so, by what Master Plan did Martin Luther initiated the so-called Reformation from Wittenburg. Who ever thought that the Gospel message of the simple love of God that cuts across all human made barriers and conventions that moved large populations from the untouchable people groups would cross over and become 'People of the Book'. Bible tells us that healing is God's business and we can only pray and invite the Holy Spirit to set this nation right on the path of righteousness and Holyness. ●

The Poor are with Us!

>>> Contd. from Page 4 Col. 5

should be equally accessible to all. ***Helping the poor is a matter of justice before a question of charity…"*** **Words that are familiar, but very hard to swallow!**

In his concluding para Pope Leo prays, "*let us entrust ourselves to Mary Most Holy, Comforter of the Afflicted and, with her, let us raise a song of hope as we make our own the words of the Te Deum: "In you, O Lord, is our hope, and we shall never hope in vain."* Just before that, he gives us his final salvo, "*It is my hope, then, that this Jubilee Year will encourage the development of policies aimed at combatting forms of poverty both old and new, as well as implementing new initiatives to support and assist the poorest of the poor. Labour, education, housing and health are the foundations of a security that will never be attained by the use of arms. I express my appreciation for those initiatives that already exist, and for the efforts demonstrated daily on the international level by great numbers of men and women of good will."*

Pope Leo is unequivocal when he states "*The gravest form of poverty is not to know God. This is a rule of faith and the secret of hope: all this earth's goods, material realities, worldly pleasures, economic prosperity, however important, cannot bring happiness to our hearts. Wealth often disappoints and can lead to tragic situations of poverty — above all the poverty born of the failure to recognize our need for God and of the attempt to live without him".*

Pope Leo's message comes then as a challenge to all who claim to be followers of Jesus. Whilst his message is obviously and directly for Catholics, in its sum and substance it transcends the narrow confines of any particular religion. His message is in face a challenge to the whole of humanity- every single person- **'Are we willing to see God in the poor? Do we have the courage to allow the poor to lead us to God? Are we ready to become poor?'** All inter-related dimensions in order to make us realise as he says, ***"the poor are our beloved brothers and sisters."***

Then comes the general attitude towards the poor! The poor are looked down with disdain! The poor who are often made domestic workers or as casual labourers are not given just wages, made to work long hours and not even accorded the dignity, which is the birthright of every human who is created in the image and likeness of God!

Unfortunately, Church directives are conveniently overlooked, swept under the carpet! Many prefer to be caught up with rites and rituals, the cosmetics and tokenisms and escape from the challenges that confront our Christian identity! **Will the 'World Day of the Poor' be yet another 'event' when we indulge in lip service and empty rhetoric?** Are we committed to translating the directives given to us by the Church into substantial action both individually and collectively? Are we concerned that in the 2025 Global Hunger Index ranked India 102 out of the 123 countries and India has a level of hunger that is considered serious?

The way ahead is clear; there can be no doubt or debate on that! Pope Leo both in his message and in his Apostolic Exhortation has given us a roadmap, which no Christian with a conscience can deny. The poor are with us; they are our hope! Pope Leo reminds us that, *"Love for the Lord, then, is one with love for the poor…. The condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church…Every form of poverty, without exception, calls us to experience the Gospel concretely and to offer effective signs of hope*". Do we have the prophetic courage to accept that challenge, to make that a reality in our lives today? ●

Young People's Column

Sacred Discontent: Redefining the Church Space and Christian Responsibility

G. Sundeep Kumar

When we talk about church space, we often begin with what we can see, the structure, the architecture, and the location that hosts our gathering for worship. This traditional view identifies church space as the physical space set apart for liturgy, sacraments, and gathering of the people. However, Scripture always pushes us beyond these definitions. In both the Old and the New Testaments, sacred space is never confined by walls. Sacred space is ultimately about God's presence, God's people, and God's mission. So, while buildings can fulfill a purpose, they do not encompass the complete meaning of church space.

In my understanding, church space includes the pastor, the congregation, and the missionary engagement of the church in the public. This understanding is more in line with Solomon's understanding of his prayer of dedication and blessing of the Temple (1 Kings 8), who admitted, "even the heaven of heavens cannot contain" God. **Solomon's understanding is that a Temple only matters if it becomes a space that listens and forgives, and is based on justice. It is not the stone that makes it holy, it is the faithfulness of its people.** This understanding, in the Indian context today across CSI, CNI, Lutheran, Baptist, and Methodist Churches is calling the church to see that its space really exists wherever its people serve.

This leads to the theological Sacred Discontent, a sacred dissatisfaction that mirrors God's heart. **Sacred Discontent is neither cynicism nor rebellion. It is the intense spiritual persuasion that reveals that the world is not as it should be by God's design. It is the fire in Moses' heart for the oppressed, the pain in Nehemiah when he heard about the decimation of Jerusalem, and the sorrow in Paul as he saw the early church in disunity. Sacred Discontent compels followers of Jesus to reject apathy. It calls for personal re-imagination and reshaping of social engagement.**

When applied to church space, Sacred Discontent questions us, whether we are comfortable with beautiful edifices while there are intact neighborhoods. Are we resigned to the decline of justice, compassion, and fellowship as a reality? **When we experience this holy restlessness, we know that we are being invited to act. Abraham Joshua Heschel, a Jewish scholar, in his idea of divine pathos argues that God himself experiences a kind of sacred discontent. The prophets, also, convey God's holy suffering for the world.**

Sacred Discontent redefines church space by expanding it beyond architecture to vocation, compassion, and mission. Heschel teaches that God's heart burns with holy dissatisfaction at the suffering and injustice of the world. When believers, pastors, congregations, or entire churches share this divine burden, they become prophetic communities, agents of God's justice, ambassadors of God's compassion, and incarnations of God's holy anguish.
Thus, Sacred Discontent is nothing less than sharing God's emotional involvement with the world.
This transforms church space from a geographical location into a living, dynamic movement of God's heart into the world.

Rev. Dn. G. Sundeep Kumar is an ordained minister in the Krishna - Godavari Diocese of the Church of South India and is currently serving as an assistant pastor in St John's Parish, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

All congregations contain doctors, lawyers, teachers, professors, farmers, social workers, business people, home-makers, students, and labourers. **When these people are at work in a hospital, a court, a classroom, an office, or a neighborhood, they are extending the space of the church.** Wherever a believer is demonstrating the compassion, the justice, and the truth of Christ, that place is a space of the church. And the space is understood as any place where the body of Christ is active, not just in the sanctuary.

It is easy for mainline churches in India, with their liturgical and theological traditions, to experience challenges from that tradition to produce forming, transformative disciples. **Are we making disciples who care for the poor, who challenge injustice, who advocate for the environment, and who lift up the marginalized? Paul's radical vision that in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew" is a radical and meaningful, critique of caste, class, gender bias, and denominational pride in our churches today.**

The responsibility of Christians cannot be limited to Sunday worship and fellowship but must include those aspects of fellowship that communicate character building and community. **A congregation of Christians, that ignores their struggling members is the antithesis of what the new testament shows the church to be, specifically as the body of Christ, where each member cares for others. In this equity, a small congregation committed to justice and mercy is much more faithful than a massive cathedral ignoring the poor.**

When you argue that church space extends beyond the sanctuary into the calling and vocation of believers, Heschel's theology strengthens that claim profoundly. Because if believers participate in God's compassion in hospitals, share God's justice in courts, embody God's kindness in schools, reflect God's integrity in workplaces, carry God's mercy into society, then the sacred space of Divine Pathos is expanded into every sector of life. This means Church space is wherever God's holy discontent meets human brokenness through His people. **This makes your theological claim not just practical or sociological, but profoundly biblical and prophetic.**

In conclusion, Sacred Discontent redefines church space by expanding it beyond architecture to vocation, compassion, and mission. Heschel teaches that God's heart burns with holy dissatisfaction at the suffering and injustice of the world. When believers, pastors, congregations, or entire churches share this divine burden, they become prophetic communities, agents of God's justice, ambassadors of God's compassion, and incarnations of God's holy anguish. Thus, Sacred Discontent is nothing less than sharing God's emotional involvement with the world. This transforms church space from a geographical location into a living, dynamic movement of God's heart into the world. ●

New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA)

Joint letter to G20 Leaders' Summit urging economic, social, and climate justice

>>> Contd. from Page 1 Col. 4

structural change necessary for a true Jubilee:

● Establish a United Nations Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt, recognizing the shortcomings of the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments in providing timely and effective resolutions to debt crises.

● Recognize and address ecological debt, end exploitative extractivism, and provide financing for climate mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage through non-debt-creating funds without imposing conditions on economic policy.

● Reject debt-for-nature swaps that result in further commodification of nature, displacement, and undermining of Indigenous and rural autonomy.

● Reject austerity measures as a means of development or fiscal responsibility while protecting social spending.

● Conduct transparent debt audits in countries at high and medium risk of debt distress, involving civil society participation, to evaluate the legitimacy of debts.

● Impose meaningful taxes on high net-worth individuals, financial speculators, and multinational corporations, so they pay their fair share and stop extracting from our communities.

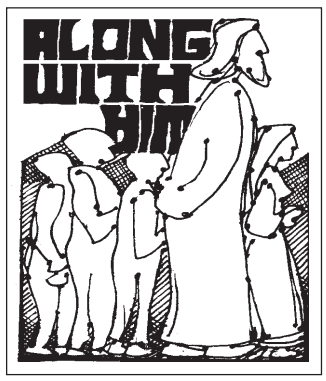
● Enforce corporate accountability: Hold transnational corporations legally accountable for environmental destruction, labor abuses, and human rights violations.

● Recognize and redistribute care: Build systems that value and resource care work. Prioritize public investment in health, education, child and elder care, as well as in the social safety-net.

● Act against hunger: Drive public investment into supporting local food systems, fair markets, and food sovereignty so that no one, anywhere, is left to starve in a world of plenty.

We pray that your deliberations and decisions be indeed guided by the spirit of Ubuntu to increase "Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability."

– NIFEA News



553

Mammen Varkey

The Selection of The Twelve - 6

A Key to the Jesus - Event

"And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons: Simon whom he surnamed Peter; James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, whom he surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, and Philip, Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." St. Mark 3: 13-19 (RSV).

[St. Matthew 10: 1-4, St Luke 6: 12-16, Acts 1: 13.]

In the recent parts of the reflections "Along With Him", we have been trying to reflect deeply, multidimensionally, on the long process Jesus undertook for the selection of his 12 special disciples / 'apostles'. In the last issue (Along With Him - 552) we reflected on the three matters we should, in no way, ignore while trying to understand deeply Jesus' process of the selection of his twelve disciples, his 'apostles'.

1. The selection was done after the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus. *"And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying "This is my beloved Son," with whom I am well pleased."* Matthew 3: 16 & 17 (RSV). **It unquestionably reveals that the selection by Jesus, of the disciples was an act guided and determined by the Holy Spirit and so was it also with all the resultant matters.**

2. Jesus' mission was the establishment of the Kingdom of God. **So the twelve were specially chosen for participating fully in the Master's mission, in the mission of the establishment of the 'Kingdom of God' encompassing the whole of the earth.**

3. Jesus called his twelve special disciples not only to heal the sick who were part of the then 'society', but even the lepers, the 'untouchables' of those days. **The disciples had to invariably emulate, to do, what Jesus actually did.** Their master went to the leper, the extremely untouchable in those days, touched him and healed him. **A leper was made part of his fellowship, and the society. Jesus well revealed to those who were near him and to the people of those days that the lepers, the 'untouchables' were also an integral part of the society. It was an undeniable call to his disciples to rise above all human-made separations, divisions, etc. And to pull down all such man-made walls.**

In the 'Gospel According to Matthew' the selection of the four – Peter, his brother Andrew, James and his brother John - is described in chapter 4, Verses 18-22. The names of the other eight disciples are given, after 5 chapters, in chapter 10. What Matthew narrates in the chapters 5, 6 and 7 is the text of the much proclaimed 'Sermon on the Mount'. **Because of extreme space constraints, a detailed reflection/study of the 'Sermon on the Mount' is not attempted here. We are reflecting only on a few points deeply relevant to our reflections on the process of Jesus' selection of his 'Twelve Disciples'.**

1. The beginning verses of 'The Sermon on the Mount', as given in the Gospel According To Matthew', are ***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5:3 & 4.*** **If we try to understand these verses deeply, our way of thinking will be radically altered.** Through these verses, Jesus asked for a radical revision of their understanding and faith. It is not the wealth of this world, the 'richness' in its common understanding, that will make you heirs of 'the kingdom of heaven'. **It also calls for a new understanding of the self (spirit). The disciples of Jesus should definitely have a new 'self', and be 'poor in spirit'.**

2. The next verse is 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'. Matt. 5:5. It is a total rejection of this world's dominant pattern of thinking. It is not the wealth, power and might that would 'inherit' the earth. We adore only the 'mighty', the influential, the power-wielding and totally ignore 'the meek'. **It is total rejection of the discipleship of Jesus. 'The Twelve' were selected on the basis of these, to uphold strongly these principles.**

3. The next verse is 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied' Matt. 5:6. **It is an amazing, to many shocking, declaration, if we take it seriously.** Very briefly shared, the two very clear messages are great. **First, all, those who follow Jesus, all the disciples of Jesus, must be 'hungry' for 'justice'. We all know, a human being cannot but feel hunger. Secondly, a disciple, a follower, of Jesus cannot but be 'thirsty' and 'hungry', committed to 'justice'. As a hungry person will not reserve any effort for earning 'food', a disciple of Jesus cannot but commit himself or herself to fight for justice, and against structures and systems of injustice.** ●

To be continued

LAMP UNTO THE FEET, LIGHT UNTO THE PATH

Put The Sword Back In Its Place

A. V. Itty

Mt. 26:47-56

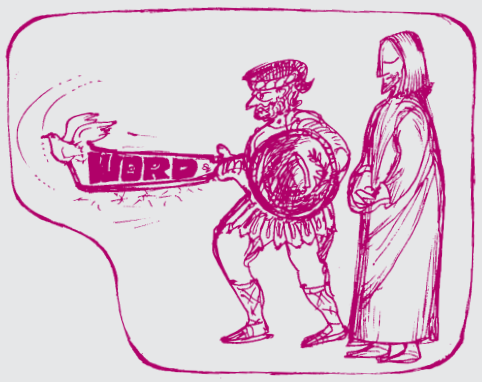
"Put your sword back in its place", Jesus said to him.

"All who take the sword will die by the sword"(v.52).

God is omnipotent, kind, patient, and generous. Yet, to receive His grace and blessings, we need to surrender the weapons of our flesh. To avail His help, we need to say good-bye to the ideas coming out of our worldly intellect. When the crowd under the leadership of Judas, sent by the High Priest came to capture Jesus, Peter drew his sword out and cut the ear of the High Priest's slave. At that moment Jesus raised his voice and said: "Put your sword back in its place. All who take the sword will die by the sword" (v.52). Luke tells us that not only did Jesus scold Peter, but also He healed the slave called Malkos (Lk. 22:51).

During the subsequent days of sufferings of Jesus, Peter could not stand with Jesus, may be because, he had taken up the sword of flesh?

The sword of flesh may create different kinds of disruptions in our fellowship with Jesus. During our distress, we should be able to take up the sword of the Word and the sword of the Spirit, rather than the sword of the flesh.



Then only we shall be able to continue in fellowship with Jesus for ever.

Those who are with Jesus have the responsibility to follow the life style of Jesus.

Prof. A. V. Itty, former Professor of English at Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara, is, now, engaged in the Evangelical, and Educational Ministry undertaken by ADORE in the Rayagada Dist. of Odisha. 94950 17850 (Mob)

Let "the sword of the Spirit and God's armour" (Eph.6:13-17) be our armaments. May God help us. ●

Food For Thought:

The weapon of a believer should be always the Word, and not the sword!

WORDTOON

When some HOSTS use more 'G'HEE, GHOSTS appear!

WORDTOON

Prayer For Interfaith Relations

Raj Bharat Patta

Rev. Dr. Raj Bharat Patta is an ordained minister of Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church and is a Dalit public theologian. He currently serves the British Methodist Church at United Stockport Circuit.

Divine Spirit, the source, the spring
and the sustainer of faith(s),
We thank you for choosing us
in your own way,
Finding us on our own paths,
Gifting faith as your fruit in our lives,
Revealing us that you are love
and love alone,
Reminding us that though we are
different, we are all equal,
Calling us to affirm diversity in unity
and to celebrate unity in diversity.

God of love, we are deeply concerned
of the climate around us today,
Where friction between faiths is increasing,
Where far-right extremism is on the rise,
Where fear of the 'other' is growing,
Where hatred against the strangers is deepening,
Where gap between the haves and have-nots is widening,
Where discrimination on those on the margins is intensifying,
Where exclusion, rejection and oppression unfortunately continue in the name of religion,

So, God of peace,
may the Interfaith prayer challenge us as people of faith(s)
to respect each other with mutual dignity, care and compassion,
to open ourselves unto one another in humility and grace,
to strive for community cohesion by building bridges of love,
to defeat hostility by offering hospitality,
to overcome divisiveness by standing in solidarity with each other,
to live out our faith(s) as a tool of transformation in the public sphere,
so that we become nations of sanctuary
by demonstrating faith in actions,
working for justice, peace, love, truth and friendships
to flourish in our contexts today.

In the name of the name above all names we pray.

Shelter Action Foundation

Dreaming of Green Christmas Celebrations

Bp Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian (CSI) visits Shelter Action Foundation stall at Tiruvalla

Dear Friends,

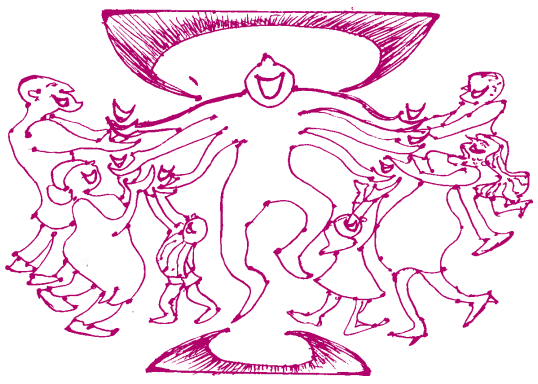
More than 95% of our Christmas decorations are made from plastic and non-biodegradable materials, mostly imported from China, which are extremely harmful to our environment.

In this context, collectives of Tribal and Dalit women living near the forests on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border have created amazing Christmas decorations - fairy lights, Christmas wreaths, hangings, and stars, all made of bamboo - and are seeking to reach maximum buyers across the country through an initiative called GreenKraft. Shelter Action Foundation, launched the Green Christmas - Peace on Earth Campaign and warmly invites everyone to join this movement, which offers 100% natural Christmas decorations to homes, institutions and churches across India at affordable prices. **Let this Christmas be free from plastics. This is more than buying a star, It's investing in sustainability, giving dignity to the marginalised, and silently praying for the Earth, Christ came to save. Celebrate a Green Christmas-because peace on Earth begins with you and me.**

The margins we get from this will be contributed to spread warmth this winter. Thus you are participating in two causes, one you are contributing to the livelihood sustenance of Tribal women in the margins and second you are contributing to the cold relief program of Shelter Action Foundation and brings smile on the face of people who are on the streets of North Indian cities.

For more information: Please contact Shiby Peter (7827657306), Ashi Sara Oommen (8590678914) and Jose Peter (9747910362).

CHEER CHAT



"Happiness comes from helping others, by being with others, and by sharing, even if it's only a Smile!"

– Zain Hashmi

Christian Conference of Asia

an organ and fellowship of churches and ecumenical councils in asia for initiating and facilitating dynamic christian witness and action

Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference

"Ensuring gender equality is a shared moral and social responsibility"

>>> Contd. from Page 1 Col. 1

Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference - Leaders and Participants

>>> Contd. from Page 1 Col. 1

positions across both the public and private sectors and continue to be marginalised. While many countries have established legal protections for women's rights, deep-rooted social norms and cultural barriers still hinder their effective implementation.

The Asian Ecumenical Women's Conference (AEWC) - 2025 concluded with a strong call for transformative change for ensuring gender justice by addressing the root causes of gender inequality, changing structural barriers through actions in legal and policy reform, and improving systems to transform the social and institutional structures that perpetuate inequality and dehumanisation.

Over three days of intensive deliberations analysing the pressing challenges women across Asia face today, church women leaders from different parts of the region explored ways to uphold women's dignity and rights.

A communiqué adopted towards the end of the AEWC outlined their commitments for action.

The communiqué urged churches and faith-based organisations to become spaces of liberation by empowering women in leadership, challenging patriarchal traditions, promoting gender justice, and working with civil society to support vulnerable women, including migrants, refugees, and women with disabilities. Delegates also called for action on climate and eco-justice, digital safety, and interfaith and intercultural solidarity.

Governments in Asia were urged to take immediate steps to address domestic violence, trafficking, and sexual harassment; promote women's leadership; ensure access to education and healthcare; close the gender digital divide; advance economic justice; protect women human rights defenders; and uphold international human rights commitments.

Participants affirmed their sacred responsibility to act, calling on churches, communities, and ecumenical partners to join in concrete efforts for justice, equality, and the protection of women's dignity.

– CCA News

People's Reporter
A FORUM OF CURRENT AFFAIRS

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